

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Original) A memory card comprising an erasable and programmable nonvolatile memory and a control circuit,

wherein a memory array of said nonvolatile memory includes an erasing table for storing a first flag indicating whether the memory area is a vacant area or not in every erasing unit,

wherein said memory array includes a plurality of memory cells that have a predetermined threshold voltage, and

wherein said control circuit has pre-erasing control to previously erase a predetermined memory area corresponding to the first flag indicating the vacant area irrespective of an operation instruction from the outside for instructing the address for changing the threshold voltage.

2. (Original) The memory card according to claim 1,

wherein a second flag indicating whether the memory area is in the erase condition or not corresponding to said first flag, indicating whether the memory area is a vacant area or not, is also included, and

wherein said control circuit regards, in the pre-erasing control, the memory area indicated to be a vacant area by said first flag and indicated to be a not yet erased area by said second flag, as an object area to be erased.

3. (Original) The memory card according to claim 2, wherein said erasing table comprises an area having said first flag and said second flag.

4. (Original) The memory card according to claim 3, wherein said control circuit alters, in the pre-erasing condition, the corresponding second flag to the condition indicating the erased area after completion of the erasing process to the memory area as an erasing process object.

5. (Original) The memory card according to claim 4, wherein said control circuit performs the control to assign, to a new memory area for writing a new data to be updated, the memory area designated as a vacant area with said first flag and as an erased area with said second flag.

6. (Original) The memory card according to claim 5,
wherein said control circuit updates the corresponding
first flag of memory area to which an old data is written
to the condition to indicate a vacant area after the data
is written into said new memory area.

7. (Original) The memory card according to claim 6,
wherein said memory array of nonvolatile memory
further comprises an address translation table indicating
the correspondence between logical address and physical
address of memory area, and

wherein said control circuit updates, after the data
is written to said new memory area assigned on the basis of
said first and second flags, said address translation table
through correspondence between the physical address of
memory area to which the data is written and the logical
address before the update of the corresponding first flag
to the condition to indicate a vacant area.

8. (Original) The memory card according to claim 1,
wherein said control circuit executes said pre-erasing
control in response to the power-on of the memory card.

9. (Original) The memory card according to claim 1,
further comprising a cipher arithmetic processing circuit,
wherein said control circuit executes said pre-erasing

control in parallel to the cipher arithmetic process executed with said cipher arithmetic processing circuit in response to a predetermined security command.

10. (Original) The memory card according to claim 1, wherein said control circuit executes said pre-erasing control in response to a predetermined exclusive command.

11. (Original) The memory card according to claim 1, wherein said control circuit starts said pre-erasing control in response to the completion of command process.

12. (Original) The memory card according to claim 11, wherein when an instruction by another command is issued before or after the start of the erasing operation by said pre-erasing control, the process of the relevant command is executed preferentially.

Claims 13 - 20 (canceled)